

Examiner's Comment/Amendment

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with John Buser on January 8, 2010.

The application has been amended as follows:

- a. amend claim 1: "In a vehicle having a passenger compartment, an instrument panel system comprising:
- an instrument panel;
 - a control panel attachable to the instrument panel, the control panel comprising a plurality of switches for use by an occupant in the passenger compartment to control at least one vehicle system;
 - an illumination source for selectively illuminating at least one of the plurality of switches, wherein each of the plurality of switches is visible to the occupant only when illuminated by the illumination source; ~~and~~
 - a control module in communication with the control panel and the illumination source, the control module for selectively interfacing the control panel with the at least one vehicle systems to be controlled, and for controlling the illumination source to selectively illuminate at least one of the plurality of switches based on the at least one of the plurality of vehicle systems to be controlled;

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wherein each of the plurality of switches comprises at least one icon for illumination by the illumination source; and

wherein the at least one icon comprises a plurality of icons, each of the plurality of icons associated with one of a plurality of vehicle systems.”

b. cancel claims 14-15

c. amend claim 16: “The instrument panel system of claim [15] 1 wherein each of the plurality of switches comprises at least one icon for illumination by the illumination source, and wherein the control module selectively illuminates the at least one icon based on the at least one vehicle system to be controlled.”

d. amend claim 17: “In a vehicle having a passenger compartment, an instrument panel system comprising:

an instrument panel;

a control panel attachable to the instrument panel, the control panel comprising a plurality of switches for use by an occupant in the passenger compartment to control a plurality of vehicle system, each of the plurality of switches having a plurality of icons associated therewith, each icon associated with one of the plurality of vehicle systems;

an illumination source for selectively illuminating the plurality of icons, wherein each of the plurality of switches is visible to the occupant only when an associated icon is illuminated by the illumination source; and

a control module in communication with the control panel and the illumination source, the control module for selectively interfacing the control panel with

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at least one of the plurality of vehicle systems to be controlled, and for controlling the illumination source to selectively illuminate at least one of the plurality of icons based on the at least one of the plurality of vehicle systems to be controlled; and

wherein at least two icons are associated with each switch and the control module controls which of the at least two icons is illuminated and the vehicle system controlled as function thereof."

e. cancel claim 19

f. cancel claim 21

Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

According to the decision by Board of Patent Appeals, the examiner is affirmed in-part as filed December 8, 2009. The decision of the examiner rejection claims 1-3, 10-14, 16-18, and 20 is affirmed. The decision of the examiner rejection claims 15 and 21 is reversed. Thus, examiner's amendment was introduced to incorporate limitations of claims 15 and 21 into independent form as described above to place application condition for allowance.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JACOB Y. CHOI whose telephone number is (571)272-2367. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (10:00-7:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jong-Suk (James) Lee can be reached on (571) 272-7044. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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